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ABSTRACT

The problem of truancy in the elementary and junior high schools of California's Yolo County was investigated during the 1980-81 academic year by means of questionnaires completed by 16 school principals and interviews with 30 people representing schools, school district offices, law enforcement agencies, the Department of Social Services, and the Probation Department. This report on the findings includes a description of California attendance laws and outlines the legal sanctions available to administrators. The extent of and causes for truancy in the county are discussed. The four most significant factors appear to be insufficient achievement or success in school, low self-esteem, parental ineffectiveness, and the lack of penalties. Schools' current practices for dealing with truancy are listed. Following an analysis of the limitations of the current situation, the authors recommend a number of practical steps for reducing truancy problems. (Author/PGD)

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TRUANCY IN YOLO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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SUMMARY

The problem of truancy in Yolo County, CA, was investigated by means of questionnaires completed by 16 school principals and interviews with 30 people representing the school, school district offices, law enforcement, Department of Social Services, and Probation Department, during the 1980-81 academic year. Because of an interest in prevention and early intervention, the study focused on the elementary and junior high school levels.

According to California law, a truant is one who has been absent without valid excuse or tardy in excess of 30 minutes for more than 3 days. In 1974 the California Legislature created School Attendance Review Boards (SARBs), to be established in each county for the purpose of addressing attendance matters. Should SARB be ineffective in dealing with a truant, a petition requesting wardship under Section 601 of the Welfare and Institutions Code may be filed in the juvenile court. In Yolo County this step is taken by the Department of Social Services.

Based on the 14 completed questionnaires drawn from 25 elementary schools in the county, we estimate that currently there are approximately 100 elementary school truants. From data provided by junior high school administrators, another 100 junior high children are truant, representing 2.6% of the public junior high school population in the county. Truancy rates were highest in Winters and East Yolo (Washington district) and lowest in Davis.

The four factors most often mentioned as major causes were low achievement and lack of success in school, low self-esteem, parental ineffectiveness, and the absence of penalties associated with truancy.

According to school personnel attendance is monitored closely and contact with parents is made following unexcused absence. The junior high schools use detention as a punishment and rely heavily on counseling with both the student and parent or guardian in alleviating attendance problems.

Interagency relationships (schools, law enforcement, Department of Social Services and Probation) are good. The School Attendance Review Board (SARB) received a total of 27 referrals in the 1979-80 and current

school years. Juvenile Court petitions were filed in 6 cases. There was a general agreement that SARB has been ineffective in dealing with the majority of truants. Suggestions for improvement point to a streamlining of the referral and enforcement process. Two districts (Winters and Washington) use District Attendance Review Boards (DARBs) and while success rates are not optimal, they are viewed by both school and agency personnel as more effective than the countywide SARB.

Truants represent a loss of $10.22 per day of state funding to school districts. They also consume a disproportionate quantity of services, time, and resources. These expenses coupled with the long-term costs of undereducation provide a strong case for measures aimed at prevention and early intervention.

Following an analysis of the limitations of punishment, perceptions of consequences and the limits of enforcement, we recommend the following steps:

Continued and consistent monitoring of attendance on the part of the schools.

Follow-up contact with parent or guardian to enquire about the cause and to offer assistance (also to remind them of their responsibilities regarding school attendance).

Specification of maximum allowable days of absence and withholding course credit for students exceeding the maximum absence, allowing no make-up work for truancies.

Continued work on prevention in the schools by providing a broad range of opportunities for success and achievement for individual students.

Mobilization of resources to assist parents -- perhaps through the PTA with participation of counseling staff and community resource people.

Close communication between Social Workers and Probation Officers and schools.

SARB should continue to develop plans in cooperation with representatives from youth-serving agencies to provide counseling and guidance for truant pupils and tutorial services necessary for the pupil to return to the classroom

successfully.

The use of district school attendance boards (DARBs) be continued in Winters and Washington districts and be considered in Woodland and Davis. Such boards provide a network for early intervention.

Strengthen SARB in order to provide a back-up resource for the schools, Social Services, and DARBs. By strengthening, we mean the filing of court petitions when other measures have failed.

Recognize the inherent limitations of SARB and court proceedings, and make every effort to resolve the problem through prevention or earlier intervention.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Truancy Project has been to assess the extent of truancy in Yolo County and to examine institutional and agency involvement and procedures in dealing with the problem. The County of Yolo has a population of 119,000, and is located in California's central valley. The primary economic base is agriculture. Woodland is the County seat and a branch of the University of California is located in Davis. The five school districts within the County jurisdiction are the Woodland Joint Unified, Winters Joint Unified, Davis Joint Unified, Esparto Unified and Washington Unified (encompassing the communities of Broderick, Bryte, and West Sacramento.

Because of our strong interest in prevention as well as intervention, we have focused our attention upon the elementary and junior high school years. We have attempted a comprehensive coverage of the public schools and agencies for which truancy is an issue. The goal was to present as objective a view of the situation as possible and to specify directions for improvement which may then be weighted and evaluated by the agencies and individuals involved so that action may be taken where deemed appropriate.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the Departments of Probation and Social Services for their co-sponsorship of the project and for the provision of resources. However, we, as authors, take full responsibility for any errors, misquotations, or misinterpretations that might be in the material. We are also very grateful to the many individuals representing law enforcement, schools, and agencies in the county who gave of their time. They were, without exception, gracious and helpful.

Background

In the Spring of 1979 the Yolo County Delinquency Prevention Commission and the Juvenile Justice Commission met with Superior Court Judge James F. Roach, then on the juvenile bench; and school representatives

concerned with the issue of truancy. The Juvenile Justice Commission established a subcommittee to delve further into the issue, and, to avoid duplication, the Delinquency Prevention Commission chose not to pursue it further. In a report dated July 16, 1979, the Juvenile Justice truancy subcommittee pointed out the need for more direct attention to the problem by elementary school counselors, a more complete program by police, more staff for follow-up of truancy by Social Services, and earlier implementation of contact by the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) -- a state-required county board whose function is to meet the needs of students in dealing with attendance and school problems. During May and June, the Probation Department conducted a needs assessment of the public schools throughout the County. A number of issues were covered, and truancy emerged as a major concern in Davis, Woodland, and East Yolo.[1]

The following Spring (1980) the two commissions, Delinquency Prevention and Juvenile Justice were merged and after a period of reorganization, a delinquency prevention subcommittee was formed and the issue of truancy emerged once again as a matter of concern. It was that concern which led to an application by the first author to the Kellogg Public Service Research Program for funds as a UCD faculty member, to study the problem of truancy in collaboration with the departments of Social Services and Probation. Those funds were made available in Fall 1980.

California attendance laws

The legal bases for dealing with school absenteeism are found in Articles 5 and 6 of the California State Education Code, and Sections 601(b), 601.1 and 601.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code (see Appendix A).

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[1] The above summary is based on minutes from the Delinquency Prevention and Juvenile Justice Commissions during the period covered and survey reports from the Probation Department, August 1, 1979.

Definition of truancy

The Educational Code states that a pupil who is absent from school without valid excuse or tardy in excess of 30 minutes for more than 3 days is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district. Following such report, if the pupil is again absent without excuse for 1 or more days, a subsequent report is to be made. After three or more reports (including the original one) and a conscientious effort by appropriate school personnel to hold a conference with the pupil and parent or guardian, the pupil is deemed an habitual truant.

School Attendance Review Board (SARB)

The focal group concerned with addressing problems of truancy in each county is the School Attendance Review Board, generally known by the acronym, SARB. These boards were created by the California Legislature in 1974 in order to address problems of school attendance. Each county is required to maintain a SARB and to provide for their establishment as needed to address the needs of students with attendance and related school behavior problems. SARBs are to provide intensive guidance and coordination of community resources in addressing these problems.

The Yolo County SARB consists of 11 members: a parent, one representative each from the five school districts, Social Services, Probation, County Office of Education, District Attorney's Office, and the County Sheriff's Office (see Appendix B). Any pupil who is an habitual truant, or is irregular in attendance or is habitually insubordinate or disorderly during attendance may be referred to SARB (Section 48263, Education Code). When a referral is made, Board members meet and some members may be designated to take specific steps involving their agencies. The Board meets with the child and parent or guardian, and a plan for promoting school attendance is developed. School attendance is monitored and supervision is of an informal nature. Should the plan fail, formal proceedings may be initiated. The County Superintendent of Education, at SARB's instigation, can request that the Department of Social Services file a petition for a court hearing under the provisions of Section 601 of the Welfare

and Institutions Code. Figure 1 illustrates the procedures within SARB.

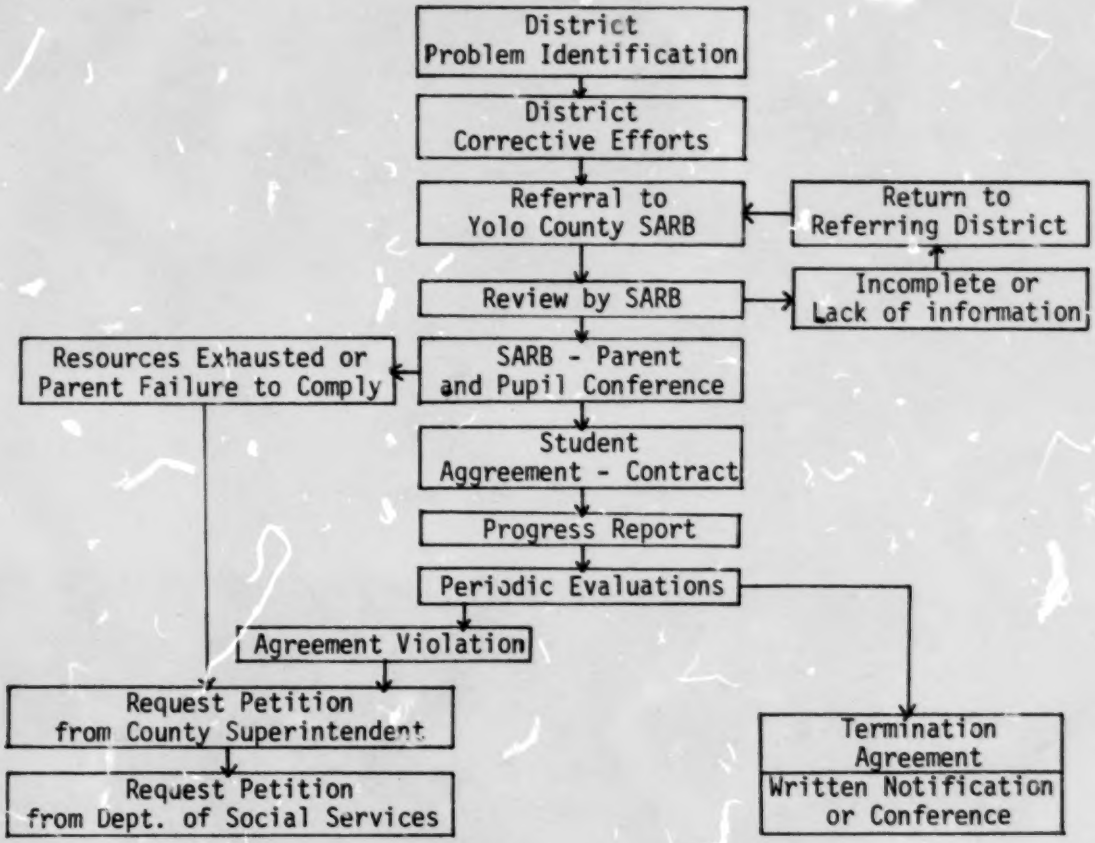
District Problem Identification
District Corrective Efforts
Referral to Yolo County SARB
Return to Referring District
Review by SARB
Incomplete or Lack of information
Resources Exhausted or Parent Failure to Comply
SARB - Parent and Pupil Conference
Student Aggreement - Contract
Progress Report
Periodic Evaluations
Agreement Violation
Request Petition from County Superintendent
Request Petition from Dept. of Social Services
Termination Agreement
Written Notification or Conference

Figure 1. School Attendance Review Board (SARB) - Flow-chart.

Disposition in the Juvenile Court

The petition requests that the pupil be declared a ward of the court. The Department of Social Services conducts a formal investigation and makes a report to the court.

> If a school attendance review board determines that the available public and private services are insufficient or inappropriate to correct the habitual truancy of the minor, or to correct the minor's persistent or habitual refusal to obey the reasonable and proper orders or directions of school authorities, or if the minor fails to respond to directives of a school attendance review board or to services provided, the minor is then within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court which may adjudge such person to be a ward of the court; provided, that it is the intent of the Legislature that no minor who is adjudged a ward of the court pursuant solely to this subdivision shall be removed from the custody of the parent or guardian except during school hours. (Sect. 601(b) Welfare and Institutions Code)

In addition to declaring wardship, the judge of the juvenile court

may order the parent or guardian to deliver the child to school at the beginning of each school day for the remainder of the term. The parent or guardian may be required to post a bond in the amount of $200 with the condition that the child will remain in attendance for the term and not be insubordinate or disorderly during school attendance. If the conditions are not met, the court may order forfeiture.

Other legal sanctions

Violations of the Education Code also establish a basis for prosecution of parents or guardians in the municipal court. The investigation and court filing of such complaints is the responsibility of the governing board of the school district or the attendance officer. The parent, guardian, or other person in charge of a pupil who violates the attendance law may be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined up to $25 or jailed for as many as 5 days. Subsequent convictions carry stiffer penalties.

Comment on court sanctions

Although the sanctions described above are available to the courts, they are rarely imposed and there have been no instances within recent memory of either parents' being fined or sentenced to jail in Yolo County under these statutes.

METHOD

A 20-item questionnaire was mailed to 24 elementary and 7 junior high school principals. In addition we interviewed 30 persons representing schools and county agencies. Questionnaire items covered attendance policies used at the schools, estimates of the number of children in various categories of truancy; factors believed to contribute to truancy; factors which might serve to increase school attendance; and effectiveness of other agencies in curbing truancy. The interviews with representatives of district offices and other agencies asked about their dealings with truant, policies and procedures, interagency relationships, and suggestions for dealing with truancy. (See Appendix D for interview protocols.)

In addition respondents filled out checklists concerning agency responsibilities. These are discussed under interagency relationships below. The interviews were conducted either in-person or by telephone. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the data sources for this study.

Table 1. Number of persons interviewed and questionnaires received, by agency.

Agency	Number of people interviewed	Number of questionraires returned
Elementary schools	1	14
Junior high schools	8	2
County Office of Education	2	
School district offices (Woodland, Esparto, Davis	3	
Law enforcement (Sheriff's office-E.Yolo, Woodland, Davis, Winters	5	
Department of Social Services	6	
Probation Department	4	
SARB	1 (plus 6 other SARB members counted above)	

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM: EXTENT OF TRUANCY AT THE ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Elementary schools

The questionnaire described earlier was sent to 24 public elementary school principals (see Appendix C). Fourteen of those (representing 56% of the public elementary schools in the county) returned the completed questionnaires, with a balanced representation of all districts except Esparto. At the elementary school level, the percentages of truant children remain quite small, particularly in Davis. Based on figures provided

by the 14 principals, the percentages of children who were truant (parent-elicited, child-elicited, or parental complicity) range from zero to 4.8 percent (Winters) for the current year, and from zero to 5 percent (school in the Washington district) for the 1979-80 year. Three of the 5 Davis schools and 1 of the 5 Woodland schools reported no truancy during the past 1½ years. Although the percentages are low, the numbers themselves give a different perspective. Data from the questionnaires indicate that there were 69 truants last year, and 52 this year, to date. Table 2 shows these figures by district with estimates of the total number of truants. These projections are very approximate as they are based on the assumption of a similar pattern of school attendance for those principals who did not return the questionnaire. Based on the figures shown in Table 2, we estimate that currently there are approximately 100 children in the county who are missing elementary school without good reason (1.1% of the total public elementary school population).

Table 2. Estimates of elementary school (K-6) truancy in Yolo County, obtained data and projections.

District	Number of returned questionnaires (% of pupils in district)		Number of truants reported 79-80	Current	Truancy rate (Current percentage averaged across schools)	Total current enrollment	x	Truancy rate	=	(Estimated number of truants)
Woodland	5 of 11	(45%)	27	18	1.2%	3388	x	.012	=	(41)
Davis	5 1f 6	(84%)	7	8	0.3%	2582	x	.003	=	(8)
Washington	3 of 5	(64%)	25	15	1.2%	2096	x	.012	=	(25)
Winters	1 of 2	(44%)	10	11	4.8%	513	x	.048	=	(25)
Esparto	0 of 1	--	--	--	--	322				(?)
Total	14 of 25		69	52		8901				(99)

Junior High schools

Estimates were also obtained from the junior high schools. Administrators were asked to estimate the number of children who were showing severe attendance problems. The estimates, in most cases, were made without direct recourse to attendance records. However, they were obtained in all cases from the administrators most directly involved with truants, and from all schools.

By district, percentage estimates were Davis 1 to 1.6% with Holmes reporting more truancy than Emerson; Woodland 1 to 2.7% with Lee reporting more than Douglass; Esparto 3.2%, Winters 3.8%, and Washington (Golden State) 5.2%. These percentages translate to a total of 100 students for the current academic year, 2.6% of the total County public junior high school population.

Combining reports from the elementary and junior high schools, the estimated number of habitual or close-to-habitual truants is 200 youngsters.

Referrals to Social Services

The Department of Social Services is the responsibile agency for dealing with truants and other status offenders in Yolo County. Within the Department, this responsibility is handled within the Youth and Family Services Program. In 1980 there were 121 males and 117 females referred as truants. Combined, they comprise 43% of all status offender referrals (the other two categories are "beyond control" and "runaway").[2]

Limitations of the data

There is the likelihood of a number of "hidden truants." The most difficult to detect would be those children who were never enrolled in school and, thus, are never missed. Another group would be those absent frequently, but never to the degree of coming to the attention of the school authorities because of parental unawareness or complicity. Period cuts at the junior high may fall into this category. One junior high administrator pointed out that many of the truants are not overt behavior problems when they are in school. They are quiet, uninvolved, and often afraid of the other students -- "they just fade away." Other cases might be children who are extremely disruptive and their absence is to some extent welcome; thus, there may be a reluctance at several levels to initiate action. The Auditor General's staff in a 1978-79 audit of attendance at 48 schools in 36 districts found an underreporting of absence with the discrepancies greater at the elementary and high school levels. Looking at the average percent of students in attendance, the auditors' counts were on the average 2% lower than the teachers' counts.

CAUSES

Views of elementary school principals

In the majority of cases the parents are seen as the major contributors to the absenteeism, either through deliberate plan such as keeping

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[2]"Status offenders, 'lock-up' or services," prepared by H. Haughey, Dept. of Social Services, Yolo County, 1981

the child home for economic or psychological reasons, or comply with the child's wishes to skip school, or being ineffective in getting the child to school. Home problems and ineffective parents are seen as the two major factors underlying poor school attendance. The third factor checked by over one-half of the principals as contributing to truancy was the child's feelings of social inferiority through rejection by other students and a lack of friends. Other contributors were difficulty of school work, parental devaluation of schooling, and child's disinterest in subjects of study.

Factors which were not seen as contributing to truancy at the elementary school level were feelings of difference due to racial or ethnic factors, physical disability, socio-emotional exceptionality, problems with teachers or identification with a truant subculture. For the elementary school population, problems of school attendance are placed primarily with the parents, with a lesser role played by the child, the school, and peers.

Junior high schools

At the junior high school level there appears to be an increasing inability of parents to get unwilling children to school,* and a more clear picture emerges (though the antecedents are reported above) of an association of low achievement and low self-esteem with truancy.

Comments from agency personnel

The views expressed by Social Workers and Probation Officers were similar to information obtained from school administrators. Parent ineffectiveness was most often mentioned along with two additional causes: that the schools need an expanded curriculum and course content to meet the needs of a broader range of students, and that peer influence played a major role in truancy, especially in the junior high school years.

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*There is a strong inverse relationship between adult levels of education in Yolo County based on census tract data and the percentage estimates of truancy at the junior high school, by district. The correlation coefficient equals -.90. In other words districts with more educated populations have a lower rate of truancy.

Statewide

The points enunciated in Yolo County are very similar to others reported throughout the state. The Auditor General's 1979 report indicates that after illness, the most commonly cited reasons for absenteeism were dislike or boredom with school, social adjustment problems, family or personal business, influence of friends, and academic problems. The findings were based on questionnaire responses from school administrators, attendance personnel, counselors, teachers, and students in a sample of 48 schools in 36 districts throughout the state -- urban, suburban and rural. Other factors frequently mentioned in the statewide report were lack of procedures or authority for enforcing attendance laws, lack of parental concern or control, and factors such as learning difficulties, gang and peer pressure, and impersonal classrooms.[3]

Additional themes

Beginning in the 4th or 5th grades there is an increasing emphasis placed on abstract thought and reasoning in the curriculum which requires a greater level of cognitive maturity and skill. These curricular changes may lead to increased differences among students in their ability to learn the material. We do not have the resources in our study to examine this point more fully, but it is our general experience that there are points in the educational sequence where there is a more rapid increase in demands for particular mental abilities such as quantitative reasoning, understanding of symbols, and the ability to manipulate them in a logical manner. Self direction also becomes increasingly important from the fourth grade onward. These points in the educational sequence probably represent high risk periods for a student's success in school. For those not yet capable, remedial instruction or extra tutoring and appropriate curricula become particularly important in preventing an escalation of

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[3]"Attendance and absenteeism in California schools," report to the California Legislature, prepared by the Office of the Auditor General, Report P-832, March 1979, pp. 22-24.

failure. "Lack of success in school" was frequently mentioned as one of the major contributors to truancy. Thus, intervention aimed at increasing success in school, making school attendance a positive experience, will serve as a truancy prevention measure.

Conclusion

In sum the following four factors show up in the surveys and discussion of the causes of truancy:

1. Low achievement; lack of success in school
2. Low self-esteem
3. Parental ineffectiveness
4. Absence of penalties associated with violation of school attendance laws.

CURRENT POLICY: SCHOOLS

While some of the administrators rely on the legal definition of truancy -- more than 3 days unexcused absence, many use a working definition of simply being absent from school without knowledge or approval of the parents, or without valid excuse. All of the schools contacted take attendance on a daily basis. The majority contact the parents when no excuse is received on the child's return to school, and many of the schools contact the family by telephone on the first or second day of absence.

At the junior high schools, attendance is taken in each class. Lee uses a system whereby cumulative days absent shows up on the daily attendance roster. Douglass has a first period absence list out by second period, thus picking up on period cuts throughout the day. If a student, not reported absent on the first period roll, is absent in a later class, the teacher notifies the office immediately. Golden State keeps a special roster on habitual truants. Their truancy rate has declined since the hiring of a dean of girls who has been very diligent in monitoring attendance.

At the junior high schools, detention (staying after school) is generally used as punishment for unexcused absence. Esparto has a discipline action committee and has held back students who have been absent so often as to not have completed the necessary work at grade level. Douglass sometimes uses work detail assignment as an alternative to detention (and as an alternative to suspension). In addition to detention, letters sent to the parent, counseling, and parent conferences are heavily used. Program changes, where appropriate, are made; behavior contracts established with the student; and involvement of the family with school personnel in solving attendance problems is encouraged at all the schools. Some respondents pointed out that often the parents need help in dealing with their children at many levels. A counselor at Lee is working through the PTA and offering parent effectiveness training. Peer counseling was seen as helping some of the borderline students.

Lee and Douglass administrators were enthusiastic about their opportunity classes, a one-period class with a small number of students (2 to 10) and an instructor who is specially trained to deal with problem students. (These are not students who have been diagnosed as requiring special education services.) Emerson, Holmes, and Golden State do not have opportunity classes, but see them as possible solutions to some problems of truancy.

CURRENT POLICY: AGENCIES AND INTERAGENCY CONTACTS

At the elementary school level those agencies seen as most effective in curbing truancy are law enforcement and Social Services. This pattern is also reflected in agency contacts; more children with attendance problems are involved in contacts with police or sheriff and Social Services -- both Youth and Family and Child Protective Services -- than with Probation, SARB, or other community agencies. At the junior high school level, contacts with Probation are more frequent.

Law enforcement

Law enforcement officers become involved with truants either through encounters during school hours, or when called to pick up a known truant. They may question youths, and return them to school, or to a parent or guardian. They also can deliver them to the Department of Social Services. They cannot place a student whose only offense is truancy (or some other status offense) in a secure facility.[4] The Sheriff's deputy in Broderick picks up potential truants and returns them to school. Davis and Woodland police talk with youngsters on the street but do not always pick them up. All the officers we spoke with commented on the difficulty of knowing whether or not the child was legitimately out of school.

In some areas known truants receive special attention when seen on the streets during school hours, but not all officers on patrol are equally knowledgeable about the chronic cases. While all departments have personnel who deal with juvenile offenses, Only Winters and East Yolo have specific school-related officers.

Winters has adopted a card program whereby students carry their school schedules with them so that when asked, they can produce proof of legitimate absence. Winter's police attempt to deal with truants directly rather than referring them to another agency. Officers in both Winters and East Yolo make themselves visible by visiting the schools and making presentations about truancy and other issues pertaining to the law. On occasions in Davis a police officer and school principal patrol the neighborhood looking for truants.

School officials throughout the County were very positive about the support services provided to them by the respective police departments and sheriff's office. Responses from East Yolo were mixed in that some administrators indicated that the agency was ineffective in dealing with truants.

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[4]Status offenses are those behaviors which are offenses because of the perpetrator's age; examples are runaway, truancy, beyond parental control, etc.

Department of Social Services

Social workers receive referrals on truancy from the schools, law enforcement or SARB, as well as some from within the department. Their principle function is to provide counseling services to the family in an attempt to alleviate the problems contributing to truancy. Once a counseling session has occurred the Social Worker contacts the school for follow-up information on attendance. They may also arrange out-of-home placement on a voluntary basis.

Yolo County is the only county in the state where status offenders (those designated under Section 601 of the California State Welfare and Institutions Code) are dealt with by the Department of Social Services. This function is performed by the Probation Department throughout the rest of the state. Because of their responsibility for status offenders, Social Services has the responsibility for filing Court petitions where requested to do so by SARB. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship of Social Services to SARB and the Court. Social Services is placed in a rather unusual position of being an agency whose function is generally described as nonauthoritarian (relying on counseling and voluntary cooperation between client and caseworker), and yet has an enforcement role concerning status offenders. The anomaly has less to do with the structure of the Department of Social Services and more to do with the ambiguities and conflicting opinions about how best to deal with status offenders. This arrangement is probably more in keeping with the intent of AB 3121, than placing the responsibility for status offenders with the Probation Department. (AB 2131 was the bill prohibiting detention of status offenders in locked setting, such as juvenile hall.)

In addition to providing family counseling, the Department of Social Services operates the Midtown school, a day treatment and education program. The age span is 12 to 17 years and most of the pupils have a prior history of truancy. Midtown has a 3-member staff serving 18 youth. It also has its own truancy problems with a rate of about 6%. However, the prior truancy record of these pupils ranged from 20 to 100%.[5]

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[5]"Status offenders, 'lock-up' or services," prepared by H. Haughey, Dept. of Social Services, Yolo County, 1981

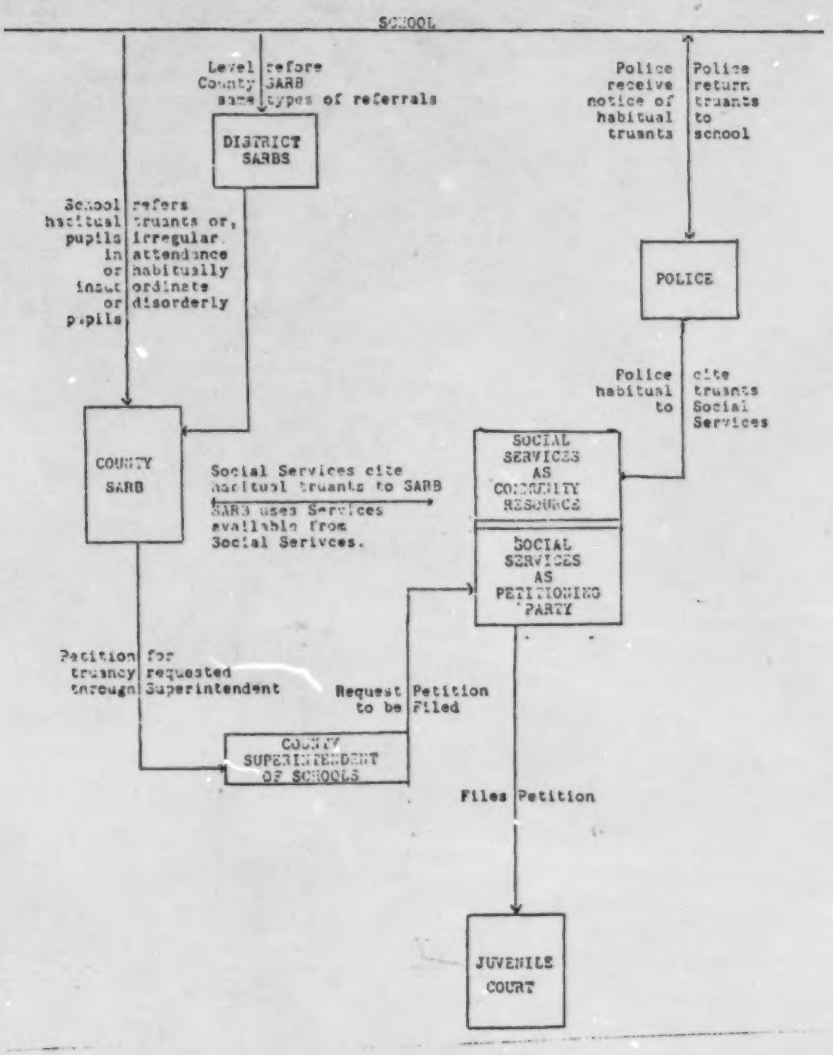
SCHOOL
Level before County SARB same types of referrals
DISTRICT SARBS
School refers habitual truants or, pupils irregular in attendance or habitually insubordinate or disorderly pupils
Police receive notice of habitual truants
Police return truants to school
POLICE
Police cite habitual truants to Social Services
COUNTY SARB
Social Services cite habitual truants to SARB
SARB uses Services available from Social Services.
SOCIAL SERVICES AS COMMUNITY RESOURCE
SOCIAL SERVICES AS PETITIONING PARTY
Petition for truancy requested through Superintendent
Request to be Petition Filed
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Files Petition
JUVENILE COURT

Figure 2. Truancy flow chart.

A junior high school administrator in East Yolo pointed out that Midtown was providing a very important service for seventh and eighth graders who previously had no alternative institution available.

Most administrators, both at the school and district levels, see the department's assistance as being effective. Of the 11 elementary school administrators who rated Social Services, 7 indicated that it was effective or very effective. Assessment from the junior high schools was that Social Services was effective at times with some indication of their being

slow on follow-up and follow-through. Effectiveness seems to vary with the individuals involved -- both caseworkers and clients.

Three of the four law enforcement officers reported minimal contact with Social Services, with the fourth officer describing a greatly improved relationship. Reciprocally, Social Services personnel reported little contact with police, particularly in Davis. Communication is maintained through mutual attendance at SARB meetings. All those contacted felt that interagency relationships were fine, although an occasional qualification was a desire for increased communication.

Probation Department

The Probation Department is indirectly involved in truancy in that their concerns are with persons who have committed criminal offenses. However, school attendance is often a problem for these youth and the Deputy Probation Officers keep a close check on attendance, and can retain a youth on probation if school attendance continues to be a problem. The Department also runs a Work Project to which truant youth under their supervision may be assigned.

The elementary schools report very few contacts with the Probation Department. Relations with the junior high schools are much more significant. All of the schools reported close contact. In all but one instance, reports were very positive with comments of "excellent," "very pleased," "good communication," "very responsive," and "very cooperative." There were a few complaints from a couple of people regarding communication problems in that schools often were not made aware of detention in juvenile hall or foster home placements involving their students. The Probation Department was seen as less effective in curbing truancy in East Yolo where it was suggested that they need a more firm stand, more consistent policy, and to move more quickly on attendance matters.

Perceptions of school and agency responsibilities

In the planning stages of this study there was concern about whether or not any agencies saw themselves as responsible for truancy problems, and whether or not there was agreement about where such responsibility

might lie. Thus, in our questionnaires and interviews, we asked respondents to indicate agencies responsible for monitoring or responding to various conditions related to truancy, for example, contacting parents, investigative follow-up, initiating legal action, etc. There responsibilities were rated by 15 local school personnel and 11 other people representing school district offices, law enforcement, Social Services and Probation. The pattern of response was very similar for the two groups. The majority in both saw the same agencies as responsible; thus the data were combined. Table 3 lists the agencies that the respondents saw as responsible for the specified activities.

Table 3. Responsibilities of agencies indicated by 50 percent or more of respondents (15 local school personnel and 11 others -- district offices, law enforcement, Social Services and Probation).

Agency / Item	Percentage of respondents checking item
Local school personnel	
Monitoring school attendance on a daily basis	100
Making the initial contact with parents when absence occurs repeatedly	100
Dealing with in-school behavior problems which may be related to truancy, i.e., conflicts with other students or teachers	100
Investigating school factors which may be affecting child's school attendance	96
Making follow-up contact with parents when absence occurs repeatedly	77
Investigating family factors contributing to absence from school	69
Responding to request for assistance from parent in enforcing child's school attendance	65
Picking up children off school grounds and returning them to school	50
Monitoring school attendance of wards of the court who are on probation	50
Social Services	
Dealing with home problems which may be affecting child's school attendance	96
Investigating family factors contributing to absence from school	85
Responding to request for assistance from parent in enforcing child's school attendance	65
Probation Department	
Monitoring school attendance of wards of the court who are on probation	92
Responding to requests for assistance from parent in enforcing child's school attendance	50
Investigating family factors contributing to absence from school	50
Police or Sheriff	
Investigating factors outside the home, e.g., nearby house without adult supervision or other area where children may congregate during school hours	88
Questioning children off school grounds during school hours	81
Picking up children off school grounds and returning them to school	62
District personnel (schools)	
Investigating school factors which may be affecting child's school attendance	54
SARB (School Attendance Review Board)	
Initiating legal action in cases of truancy where no other illegal activities are involved	50

There is a general agreement on agency responsibilities, although some variability of opinion exists. Schools have a monitoring and counseling function with the family. Social Services and Probation also have counseling functions. Law enforcement personnel are viewed as monitoring activities beyond the school and family environment. One item was notable in its lack of consensus. There was little agreement on responsibility for "initiating legal action in cases of truancy where no other illegal activities are involved." Fifty percent said that was SARB's responsibility, and 46 percent said Social Services was responsible. The fact that these percentages do not reach a majority underscores ambiguity on that issue.

CURRENT POLICY: SARB (School Attendance Review Board) and DARBs (district boards)

There were 15 students referred to SARB in the 1979-80 year and 12 referrals up to March 23, 1981 for the 1980-81 school year. A total of 6 petitions to the juvenile court were filed. Tables 4 and 5 show the referring districts and the dispositions.

Table 4. Annual SARB Report, 1979-80.

District	Number of referrals	Return to regular classes	Alternative education	601 Petition requested	Disposition of Petition
Davis Jt. Unified	4	1	1	1	5/15 Hearing-Disposition unknown
	The 4th referral was too near age 18 to proceed with request for petition.				
Esparto Unified	2	1		1	5/15 Hearing - Disposition unknown
Woodland Jt. Unif.	9	4	1	1	Placed in Home Mid-January 1960
	Seventh student moved from the district. Eighth student was being considered for placement. Ninth student - whereabouts unknown. D.A. issued warrant for arrest.				

Table 5. Annual SARB Report, 1980-81 (through March 23, 1981).

District	Number of referrals	Return to regular classes	Alternative education	601 Petition requested	Disposition of Petition
Davis Jt. Unified	6	2	3		
	Sixth student has moved from district.				
Washington Unif.	6			3	#1 Court Date 1/9/81, disp. unknown. #2 602 petition; disp. unknown #3 602 petition; disp. unknown.
	Fourth student has been made a ward of the court. Fifth student is still under contract with SARB. Sixth student did not attend conference. Have not been able to locate family.				

Evaluation of SARB

The general assessment of SARB by school and agency personnel in this County is that it has been generally ineffective in dealing with truancy. Of the 7 elementary school principals who rated SARB, 3 said it was effective, 1 said it was ineffective and 3 indicated that it was very ineffective. Personnal at the junior high schools echoed the opinion that SARB has been ineffective, although one vice-principal said the threat of SARB has been helpful because the students didn't know about its ineffectiveness. The general consensus was that specific action was needed by SARB in order to restore its credibility. Criticisms were "cumbersome machinery," "would be helpful if not too drawn out," "need firm stand on enforcement," "take more active role regarding home environment," "move more quickly," and "need more consistency in policy." Some of the SARB members themselves were less than enthusiastic about their role indicating that it worked only as a scare tactic and had little additional value. One member stated that SARB was doing the best it can within its legislative guidelines; that it was composed of "good, interested, compassionate people" who need to have more leverage.

The limitations of SARB are not unique to Yolo County. Numerous school personnel, county probation and juvenile justice staff throughout the state have indicated problems in SARB activity. Obstacles cited in the Auditor General's 1979 report to the Legislature were weaknesses in the legislation, lack of interagency cooperation, absence of financial resources, and lack of State Department of Education leadership.

In Yolo County, lack of interagency cooperation does not appear to be a problem, although Tables 4 and 5 illustrate a lack of communication regarding the outcomes of court hearings. The major concerns are limited enforcement potential and the need for streamlining the referral and enforcement process.

District Attendance Review Boards (DARBs)

Two local boards have been established -- one in the Washington District and the other in Winters. These are referred to as DARBs for the purpose of distinguishing them from the County SARB.

The Washington DARB was established in Spring 1979. During the year, 60 referrals were made (54 of those from the elementary and junior high school levels). Responses on those referrals from school principals and others involved indicated that in most cases there was little or no effect of DARB involvement on school attendance problems. Nevertheless, in a few cases effects were quite positive, especially when the parents were brought into the process. According to a progress report after its first year of operation, agency personnel viewed DARB activity more positively than did local school personnel. There was also the prediction that students were becoming aware of DARB activity and that threat of referral might bring about behavioral change. The report also indicated that need for allocating additional person power for immediate student/parent follow-up on attendance.[6] According to a spokesperson in Winters, their DARB has been in operation for 4 years, "works really well" and they do not use the county SARB.

ECONOMIC RAMIFICATIONS OF TRUANCY

School districts rely heavily upon state funds for their operation. They receive an allotment based on average daily attendance (ADA) figures. The current amount of money received from the state is $1,789.21 per 175 student days, which works out to $10.22 per student per day. These funds can only be claimed for students actually in attendance and for verified absence for illness, quarantine by health officer, medical or dental appointment or funeral services of an immediate family member. Thus, many absences, though excused because of parental involvement, result in a loss of funds for the district. For ADA purposes, there is no distinction between excused and unexcused non-illness. The Education Code also states that school districts are to collect full apportionments only for students who are in attendance for the minimum school day -- 240 minutes for grades 4 through 12 (with certain exceptions).[7] Thus, part-day cuts

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[6]"DARB 1979-80 progress report on first year of opeartion," submitted to the Board of Education from the Superintendent, prepared by R.A. Jakosa, DARB chairman, June 26, 1980.

[7]"Attendance and absenteeism in California Schools," report to the California Legislature, prepared by the Office of the Auditor General, Report P-832, March 1979.

also constitute a problem for reimbursement.

Habitual truants account for only a part of the loss of state funds. However, it is of particular significance to note the disproportionate expenditure of economic resources -- staff time and effort -- given to them when even the ten dollars from the state cannot be claimed to help offset the cost. Consider that time is spent first by the instructor in ascertaining the absence (multiplied by 6 or 7 instructors at the junior high school level). The attendance clerk spends time compiling this information and collecting it over a period of days. The administrator to whom the absences are reported must spend a substantial amount of time dealing with the student, parent or guardian. School counselors and members of agencies generally become involved. It is not at all uncommon for persons from several agencies to meet and try to figure ways of dealing with the problem. These costs have not been calculated, and while seemingly miniscule at the beginning, with the teacher's taking roll, they escalate very rapidly. Further, the habitual truant, by definition, has been intractable. Each child falling into that category has absorbed tremendous quantities of time and effort, and thus, expense, often at both the local and county levels. It is perhaps this expenditure coupled with the absence of results that makes truancy such a frustrating matter. While the number of chronic truants is not great relative to the total school population, the resources consumed by them are far out of proportion to their numbers.

Dropouts

Absenteeism, class cutting, lack of motivation, and lack of interest in school are frequent precursors of leaving school before high school graduation. Although failure to finish high school has been associated with low paying jobs and reliance on welfare, the relationship is not a clear one. The factors associated with dropping out -- (cultural or racial discrimination,) personal problems, lack of motivation -- also contribute to employment difficulties, rather than the lack of a high school education *per se* being the limiting factor. Nevertheless, it is obvious that a lack of education does restrict the range of employment opportunities. There is little, if any, economic opportunity to be gained

by the failure to graduate. It is not fitting that such a major life influence be determined by patterns initiated in childhood at a time when a person is far from possessing the capacity and maturity to make decisions of such impact on many years of later life.[8]

Criminal costs

It has frequently been alleged that a great proportion of daylight crime is committed by youths who should be in school. One law enforcement officer gave a figure of 60 percent. The factual basis for such estimates is difficult to determine because most such crimes are not solved, and thus it is difficult to ascertain who committed them, although some inferences can be made on the basis of the damage and what was stolen.

Opportunity is a necessary condition for crime and that relationship has been underscored by the decline in petty theft (primarily shoplifting) which accompanied the closing of the Holmes Junion High campus during lunch hours four years ago. The campus was not totally closed, but students were issued lunch passes only upon written request by the parent or guardian. (This practice has been continued.) Cooperation among the school, police, and business people at the local shopping center led to a very marked reduction in shoplifting. The school checked the passes before allowing students off the grounds. The police made themselves very visible at the shopping center during the times that students were most likely to be there. The business people became less reluctant to make citizens' arrests. The fact of a concerted effort by all three parties probably led to greater effectiveness than would have been the case with single actions taken at different times.[9]

In summary while it is difficult to produce hard numbers, the fact of supervision reduces the likelihood of illicit activity. There are economic costs associated with truancy, and reduction of the costs should

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[8]"Dropout Prevention," special report by the National Advisory Council on Supplementary Centers and Services, 1975.

[9]Personal communication, Davis Police Department.

be considered when evaluating the expense of prevention and intervention programs. Such programs may actually pay much of their way by reducing the less direct costs of truancy -- costs to the community in terms of dealing with truants and their activities, and costs to the individual and society in the future.

ANALYSIS

There appear to be two general classes of truants -- the opportunistic and the habitual, although the first may lead to the second. The opportunistic truants are those who occasionally skip school if the opportunity presents itself or if parents will go along with it. The distinguishing characteristic of the opportunistic truant is that he or she will return to school when pressure is applied. Habitual truants are those who are defined as unresponsive to attempted remedies. We learn who they are after the fact. One response to the habitual truant is to increase the penalties. Another is to assume that the child's intransigence in the face of fairly strong pressures to attend school is likely to continue despite increased authoritative measures. There are many who believe that children do not see pressure on them to attend school, that they feel no one can make them go to school. Yet, realistically, there are many pressures, social as well as legal, regarding school attendance. The simple fact is that the vast majority of children attend school.

There is an extensive literature on the relationship between punishment and behavior. We know that punishment is most effective in altering behavior when it is of mild to moderate severity and follows immediately after the behavior to be changed. In other words, punishment is most effective when swift and certain. Punishment is also most effective in altering behaviors which are not yet well established or habitual. Severe punishment will also alter behavior, but tends to be less effective than mild or moderate punishment in that the strong emotional consequences of severe punishment interfere with the person's learning exactly what it is that is being punished. This is particularly the case when punishment is delayed. Further, for both legal and moral reasons, severe punishment is less likely to be swift and certain.

For the above reasons, punishment of a disciplinary sort is most effective when it is promptly applied to the casual or opportunistic truant. It is less likely to be effective in altering chronic patterns of nonattendance. When delayed, for example by lengthy processes of adjudication, its effectiveness is further reduced. Thus, to consider SARB measures or Court proceedings as punishment which will deter or eliminate truancy is to lean on a very weak psychological reed. The time lag alone renders them indirect.

Limits on the perceptions of consequences

It is possible that threat of legal sanctions may possess a preventive function, indirectly as a threat. Unfortunately, we encounter further difficulties of a psychological sort in the nature of the thought processes of children and adolescents. Until late adolescence or even adulthood for some, most young people have difficulty in fully accepting the consequences of their actions or the actions of others. This lack has been referred to as the "personal fable," that "it can't happen to me." Other people get sick, have accidents, get caught, etc., but that doesn't apply to oneself. This cognitive immaturity underlies much of the risk taking behavior of adolescents -- the attractions of driving fast and sexual experimentation easily outweigh the risks, because the risks are not seen to apply. It won't happen to me. Of course, the degree to which a young person holds such beliefs varies, but it is extremely common. Probably the reason we do not see more risk taking is that we limit the opportunities for it -- largely through parental and adult supervision. Thus, it is not surprising that much antisocial and self-destructive behavior is linked to an absence of adult supervision, concern, and intervention.

Limits of enforcement

In addition to the psychological factors limiting the effectiveness of punishment administered through SARB and the courts, the legal system itself is likely to provide little in the way of speeding up the process of adjudication. While a modification of the current prohibition of

detention in a secure facility for status offenders may be made in the Legislature, it is unlikely that stiff disciplinary measures will be approved for simple truancy. Even though sanctions are now provided under the law, many authorities are reluctant to use punitive methods in dealing with truancy. One can guess at the reactions of a community aroused over crimes of burglary, robbery and assault, when confronted with newspaper accounts of someone serving time in jail because their child had been playing hooky. Further, the proving of intent on the part of the parent or guardian may be difficult. The penalties available now have not been enforced, and it is difficult to believe that more severe ones would be applied. While there is a strong feeling in the community that something should be done about truants, they are not considered as serious a problem as youths who commit crimes against persons and property. If those persons are one and the same, then they may be prosecuted for their criminal offenses.

This thumbnail sketch of the psychology of adolescence and legal realities of enforcement are presented to underscore two major points:

1. Opportunities for truancy need be kept at a minimum, particularly to prevent the occurrence of casual truancy and the establishment of habitual absenteeism.
2. Habitual truants are likely to require special intervention extending beyond the imposition of penalties.

Suggested solutions

In terms of numbers the County is not experiencing an epidemic of truancy. Nevertheless, pupils not in school pose problems both for themselves and for the agencies which deal with them. They require time, effort, and an expenditure of economic resources disproportionate to their numbers, often with little result. Our respondents revealed a wide range of responses in dealing with truants -- from one administrator who felt the problems were best handled in a highly individualized manner using counseling, to another who felt that strong measures by the Court enforcing attendance were much needed.

Many suggestions were offered and are listed below under the headings

of the agencies most directly involved:

Schools

- Special classes such as opportunity classes
- Detention as punishment
- Retention (failure to promote truants to next grade)
- Integrate measures for increasing student self-esteem into regular teaching settings
- More consistency and firmness in enforcing attendance
- Counseling to extend beyond scheduling of classes
- Greater consistency in monitoring attendance
- Cross-age tutoring programs
- Recognize schools have as much power as the Courts and use it

Schools and agencies

- Follow-up home visits
- School attendance officers
- Establish alternative schools
- Counseling for families
- Establish parent-effectiveness training groups

Agencies

- SARB to assume responsibilities
- Establish DARBs (District Attendance Review Boards)
- Legal ability to detain truants in secure facility
- Hold parents accountable
- More support from the District Attorney's office in prosecuting parents

We asked respondents whether a uniform policy through the County in dealing with truants would be desirable. Responses were divided. There was support for some general guidelines, such as four truancy citings requiring a meeting with parents, and governing utilization of SARB. However, the need for flexibility in individual cases was equally stressed.

We also asked about the desirability of a community awareness program. The question brought forth two general points: skepticism about the likelihood of reaching the target population, and a desire to make the community aware of the limitations placed on schools and agencies in enforcing school attendance regulations -- a goal which unfortunately may only serve to ease the concerns of truants and their parents.

Truancy prevention and intervention programs in other districts

It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate programs used in other parts of the state. However, information about them may be useful to districts interested in developing special programs. We have listed in Appendix E, those projects and resource centers that we have found. The list is not exhaustive, nor were we able to judge the quality and effectiveness of these programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this report has been to describe as clearly as possible the situation of truancy -- its extent, causes, current policies, costs, and analysis. It is up to those in decision-making positions in the County to evaluate the information and decide about the allocation of resources and set priorities. We believe that a few additional steps along with a continuation of on-going policies may serve to reduce the incidence of truancy without incurring major additional costs:

Continued and consistent monitoring of attendance on the part of the schools.

Follow-up contact with parent or guardian to enquire about the cause and to offer assistance. Calls or letters may also serve to remind the parent or guardian and student of their responsibility regarding school attendance.

Specification of maximum allowable days of absence and withholding course credit for students exceeding the maximum absence, allowing no make-up work for truancies.

Continued work on prevention in the schools by providing a broad range of opportunities for success and achievement for individual students.

Mobilization of resources to assist parents -- perhaps through the PTA with participation of counseling staff and community resource people.* (See Appendix F for a local example.)

Close communication between Social Workers and Probation Officers and schools.

SARB should continue to develop plans in cooperation with representatives from youth-serving agencies to provide counseling and guidance for truant students and tutorial services necessary for the student to return to the classroom successfully.

The use of district school attendance boards (DARBs) be continued in Winters and East Yolo and be considered in Woodland and Davis. Such boards provide a network for early intervention with the bonus of improving communications among agencies. Contact is already being maintained in many cases, therefore, little additional structure would be needed.

Strengthen SARB in order to provide a back-up resource for the schools, Social Services, and DARBs. By strengthening, we mean the filing of court petitions when other measures have failed.

Recognize the inherent limitations of SARB and court proceedings, and make every effort to resolve the problem through prevention or earlier intervention.

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*Such programs must be presented with sensitivity and tact. Direct suggestions that parents are ineffective or falling short in their responsibilities may drive away those most in need of assistance.

Commissioner. Such report shall be made within 48 hours and shall be in writing, setting forth the fact that he has good cause to believe that such laws are being violated in such place of employment and describing the nature of the violation.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

ARTICLE 5

Truants

§ 48260. Definitions
§ 48261. Subsequent report of truancy
§ 48262. Habitual truant
§ 48263. Referral to attendance review board: Juvenile court proceedings
§ 48264. Arrest of truants
§ 48265. Delivery of truant
§ 48266. Report by arresting officer
§ 48267. Filing of complaint against truant or disorderly pupil
§ 48268. Order to parent to deliver child to school for remainder of school term
§ 48269. Parent's bond to secure attendance of pupil
§ 48270. Forfeiture of bond
§ 48271. Execution of bond
§ 48272. Report by county superintendent of schools
§ 48273. Rules and regulations to prepare report

Cross References:

Persons subject to adjudication as ward of court for refusal to obey orders of parents, etc.: W & I C § 601.

§ 48260. Definitions. Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without valid excuse more than three days or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on each of more than three days in one school year is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

Collateral References:

Law Review Articles:

Compulsory attendance laws and truancy. 5 Lincoln LR 36.

§ 48261. Subsequent report of truancy. Any pupil who has once been reported as a truant and who is again absent from school without valid excuse one or more days, or tardy on one or more days, shall again be reported as a truant to the attendance supervisor or the superintendent of the district.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48262. Habitual truant. Any pupil is deemed an habitual truant who has been reported as a truant three or more times per school year, provided that no pupil shall be deemed an habitual truant unless an appropriate district officer or employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with a parent or guardian of the pupil and the pupil himself, after the filing of either of the reports required by Section 48260 or Section 48261.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48263. Referral to attendance review board: Juvenile court proceedings. If any pupil in any district of a county is an habitual truant, or is irregular in attendance at school, as defined in this article, or is habitually insubordinate or disorderly during attendance at school, the pupil may be referred to a school attendance review board. The supervisor of attendance, or such

other persons as the governing board of the school district or county may designate, making such referral shall notify the minor and parents or guardians of the minor, in writing, of the name and address of the board to which the matter has been referred and of the reason for such referral. The notice shall indicate that the pupil and parents or guardians of the pupil will be invited, along with the referring person, to meet with the school attendance review board to consider a proper disposition of the referral.

If the school attendance review board determines that available community services cannot resolve the problem of the truant or insubordinate pupil or if the pupil fails to respond to directives of the school attendance review board or to services provided, the school attendance review board shall direct the county superintendent of schools to, and, thereupon, the county superintendent of schools shall, request a petition on behalf of the pupil in the juvenile court of the county.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

Cross References:

Payment of expenses, necessary for compliance with this Section, from county general fund: § 1510.

§ 48264. Arrest of truants. The attendance supervisor, a peace officer, or any school administrator or his designee, may arrest or assume temporary custody, during school hours, of any minor subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education found away from his home and who is absent from school without valid excuse within the county, city, or city and county, or school district.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

Cross References:

Peace officers generally: Pen C §§ 830 et seq.

Contracts for delinquency and crime prevention research, training special workers: W & I C § 1752.6.

Collateral References:

Annotations:

Truant or attendance officer's liability for assault and battery or false imprisonment. 62 ALR2d 1328.

§ 48265. Delivery of truant. Any person arresting or assuming temporary custody of a minor pursuant to Section 48264 shall forthwith deliver the minor either to the parent, guardian, or other person having control, or charge of the minor, or to the school from which the minor is absent, or to a nonsecure youth service or community center designated by the school or district for counseling prior to returning such minor to his home or school, or to a school counselor or pupil services and attendance officer located at a police station for the purpose of obtaining immediate counseling from the counselor or officer prior to returning or being returned to his home or school, or, if the minor is found to have been declared an habitual truant, he shall cause the minor to be brought before the probation officer of the county having jurisdiction over minors.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977; Amended Stats 1977 ch 36 § 203, effective April 29, 1977, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48266. Report by arresting officer. Any person taking action pursuant to Sections 48264 and 48265 shall report the matter, and the disposition made by him of the minor to the school authorities of the city, or city and county, or school district and to the minor's parent or guardian.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48267. Filing of complaint against truant or disorderly pupil. Any pupil who has once been adjudged an habitual truant or habitually insubordinate or disorderly during attendance at school by the juvenile court of the county, who is reported as a truant from school one or

more days or tardy on one or more days without valid excuse, in the same school year or in a succeeding year, or habitually insubordinate, or disorderly during attendance at school, shall be brought to the attention of the pupil's probation or parole officer.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48268. Order to parent to deliver child to school for remainder of school term. The court, in addition to any judgment it may make regarding the pupil, may render judgment that the parent, guardian, or person having the control or charge of the pupil shall deliver him at the beginning of each schoolday, for the remainder of the school term, at the school from which he is a truant, or in which he has been insubordinate or disorderly during attendance, or to a school designated by school authorities.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48269. Parent's bond to secure attendance of pupil. If the parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of the child, within three days after the rendition of the judgment executes a good and sufficient bond to the governing board of the school district with sufficient sureties in the sum of two hundred dollars ($200), conditioned that the child will, during the remainder of the current school year, regularly attend some public or private school in the city, or city and county, or school district, and not be insubordinate or disorderly during his attendance, then the court may make an order suspending the execution of the judgment so long as the condition of the bond is complied with. The bond shall be approved by the judge of the court, and be filed with the secretary of the board of education, or clerk of the board of trustees.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48270. Forfeiture of bond. If the condition of the bond is violated, the court upon receiving satisfactory evidence of the fact in any action brought therefor, shall make an order declaring the bond forfeited, and directing judgment to be enforced.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48271. Execution of bond. The governing board of the school district may, at any time within one year after the bond has been declared forfeited, have execution issued against any of the parties to the bond to collect the amount thereof. All money paid or collected on the bond shall be paid into the county treasury as provided for in Section 41001.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48272. Report by county superintendent of schools. The county superintendent of schools in each county shall annually report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction the number and types of referrals to school attendance review boards and of requests for petitions to the juvenile court pursuant to Section 48263 and shall certify to the Superintendent of Public Instruction whether or not each school district within the county has complied with provisions of this chapter. Reports shall be submitted on forms prepared by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48273. Rules and regulations to prepare report. The governing board of each school district shall adopt rules and regulations to require the appropriate officers and employees of the district to gather and transmit to the county superintendent of schools the information required to be reported by the county superintendent of schools as required by this chapter.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

ARTICLE 6

Violations

§ 48290. Investigation of complaints
§ 48291. Criminal complaint against parent
§ 48292. Filing and prosecution of complaint by attendance supervisor
§ 48293. Penalties against parents
§ 48294. Disposition of fines
§ 48295. Jurisdiction
§ 48296. Court fees

Collateral References:

Cal Jur 2d Schools §§ 375, 383.
68 Am Jur 2d Schools § 233.

§ 48290. Investigation of complaints. The governing board of any school district, shall, on the complaint of any person, make full and impartial investigation of all charges against any parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any child, for violation of any of the provisions of this chapter.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

Cross References:

Wilful cruelty toward child: Pen C § 273e.

Collateral References:

Law Review Articles:

Scaling the welfare bureacracy: Expanding concepts of governmental employee liability. 21 UCLA LR 624.

§ 48291. Criminal complaint against parent. If it appears upon investigation that any parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of any child has violated any of the provisions of this chapter, the secretary of the board of education, except as provided in Section 48292, or the clerk of the board of trustees, shall make and file in the proper court a criminal complaint against the parent, guardian, or other person, charging the violation, and shall see that the charge is prosecuted by the proper authority.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

Cross References:

Filing complaint against parent, guardian or other person in charge of minor for failure to respond to directives of school attendance review board: W & I C § 601.2.

§ 48292. Filing and prosecution of complaint by attendance supervisor. In counties, cities, and cities and counties, and in school districts having an attendance supervisor, the attendance supervisor shall make and file the complaint provided for by this article and shall see that the charge is prosecuted by the proper authorities.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48293. Penalties against parents. Any parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any pupil who fails to comply with the provision of this chapter, unless excused or exempted therefrom, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punished as follows:

(1) Upon a first conviction, by a fine of not more than twenty-five dollars ($25) or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period of not more than five days.

(2) Upon a second or subsequent conviction, by a fine of not less than twenty-five dollars ($25) or more than two hundred fifty dollars ($250), by imprisonment in the county jail for a

period of not less than five days or more than 25 days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48294. Disposition of fines. All fines paid as penalties for the violation of any of the provisions of this chapter shall, when collected or received, be paid over by the justice, court or officer receiving them to the treasurer of the city, county, or city and county, in which the offense was committed, to be placed to the credit of the school fund of the school district in which the offense was committed.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48295. Jurisdiction. Any judge of a municipal or justice court in which the school district is located, or in which the offense is committed, has jurisdiction of offenses committed under this article.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

§ 48296. Court fees. No fees shall be charged or received by any court or officer in any proceeding under this chapter.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

ARTICLE 7

Compulsory Education for the Deaf

§ 48310. Special instruction for the deaf
§ 48311. Report of physician

Cross References:
Education of physically handicapped pupils: §§ 1850 et seq.
Preschool and kindergarten service for deaf children under school age: § 59040.
Courses of instruction to parents of deaf child: § 59041.
Crippled children services: H & S C §§ 248 et seq.

§ 48310. Special instruction for the deaf. Every parent, guardian, or other person having control of any minor over five years of age and less than 20 years of age who, by reason of deafness or impaired hearing, is unable to benefit materially by the methods of instruction in use in the public schools, shall send the minor to a school or class for the deaf maintained by a school district or by the state for the full time for which the school or class is in session. The minor shall attend the school or class year after year until completion of the prescribed course of study or until discharged for good reason by the principal or other person in charge of the school or class with the approval of the governing board.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

Collateral References:
Cal Jur 2d Schools § 367.
68 Am Jur 2d Schools §§ 227–229.

§ 48311. Report of physician. Every attending or consulting physician who examines any child under 20 years of age found to be totally deaf, or with impaired hearing, as defined by the State Board of Education, shall report at once to the Department of Education the name, age, residence, and the name of the parent or guardian of the minor.

Enacted Stats 1976 ch 1010 § 2, operative April 30, 1977.

Cross References:
Employment of audiometrist to test school and preschool children: H & S C § 1685.

Article 14. Wards—Jurisdiction

(Amended and Renumbered by Stats. 1976, Ch. 1068)

600. (Repealed by Stats. 1976, Ch. 1068.)

601. Persons within jurisdiction of court. (a) Any person under the age of 18 years who persistently or habitually refuses to obey the reasonable and proper orders or directions of his parents, guardian, or custodian, or who is beyond the control of such person, or who is under the age of 18 years when he violated any ordinance of any city or county of this state establishing a curfew based solely on age is within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court which may adjudge such person to be a ward of the court.

(b) If a school attendance review board determines that the available public and private services are insufficient or inappropriate to correct the habitual truancy of the minor, or to correct the minor's persistent or habitual refusal to obey the reasonable and proper orders or directions of school authorities, or if the minor fails to respond to directives of a school attendance review board or to services provided, the minor is then within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court which may adjudge such person to be a ward of the court; provided, that it is the intent of the Legislature that no minor who is adjudged a ward of the court pursuant solely to this subdivision shall be removed from the custody of the parent or guardian except during school hours.

(Amended by Stats. 1975, Ch. 1183 and amended by Stats. 1976, Ch. 1071.)

601.1. Truancy. Any person under the age of 18 years who persistently or habitually refuses to obey the reasonable and proper orders or directions of school authorities, and is thus beyond the control of such authorities, or who is a habitual truant from school within the meaning of any law of this state, shall, prior to any referral to the juvenile court of the county, be referred to a school attendance review board pursuant to Section 48263 of the Education Code.

(Amended by Stats. 1975, Ch. 1183; amended by Stats. 1978, Ch. 380.)

601.2. Referral for petition—truancy. In the event that a parent or guardian or person in charge of a minor described in Section 601.1 fails to respond to directives of the school attendance review board or to services offered on behalf of the minor, the school attendance review board shall direct that the minor be referred to the probation department or to the county welfare department under Section 300, and the school attendance review board may require the school district to file a complaint against the parent, guardian, or other person in charge of such minor as provided in Section 48291 or Section 48454 of the Education Code.

(Added by Stats. 1974, Ch. 1215; amended by Stats. 1976, Ch. 1068; amended by Stats. 1978, Ch. 380.)

602. Persons within jurisdiction of court. Any person who is under the age of 18 years when he violates any law of this state or of the United States or any ordinance of any city or county of this state defining crime other than an ordinance establishing a curfew based solely on age, is within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, which may adjudge such person to be a ward of the court.

(Amended by Stats. 1971, Ch. 1748; amended by Stats. 1972, Ch. 84; and amended by Stats. 1976, Ch. 1071.)

YOLO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
500 First Street
Woodland, California 95695

YOLO COUNTY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW BOARD

PREAMBLE

The Yolo County School Attendance Review Board assumes the responsibility mandated by Education Code Section 48320 and will work in cooperation with local school districts and related youth agencies to meet the needs, and provide solutions, of students with school attendance or school behavior problems. The Board is committed to the utilization of all available resources toward the solution of student problems to avoid the need for referrals to the Juvenile Court. It is recognized, however, that this committment cannot be achieved without full cooperation of the student and parent. In its deliberation and decision making role, the Yolo County SARB will be aware at all times that its only purpose is for the welfare of students and will make every effort, as decisions are made, that action taken is in the students' best interest. As decisions are made, we will remain mindful that the student, too, has responsibilities to himself and to society.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Education Code Section 48324 mandates the County School Attendance Review Board to adopt rules and regulations for operation and reads in part as follows:

> *"The county school attendance and review board shall adopt such rules and regulations not inconsistent with law, as are necessary for its own government and to enable it to carry out the provisions of this article."*

Pursuant to this requirement the Yolo County SARB shall conduct its operation by rules and regulations developed and adopted by the committee members. Rules and regulations for operation of the Yolo County SARB will necessarily be changed from time to time to comply with changing legislation and procedures adopted by the California State Board of Education.

MEMBERSHIP

The Yolo County SARB, in compliance with Education Code Section 48321 shall consist of eleven (11) members from the following areas of representation:

a. One (1) parent
b. One (1) representative from each of the five (5) school districts
c. One (1) representative from the County Probation Department
d. One (1) representative from the Social Services Department
e. One (1) representative from the County Office of Education.
f. One (1) representative from the District Attorney's Office.
g. One (1) representative from the Yolo County Sheriff's Department.

SARB
Rules and Regulations

The school district representatives on the County School Attendance Review Board shall be nominated by the governing boards of the school districts and shall be appointed by the County Superintendent of Schools. All other persons or group representatives shall be appointed by the County Board of Education. All appointed members have full voting rights.

Representatives to the initial SARB formation will serve for a period of one, two, and three years and to provide continuity to the organization not more than four members' terms will exprire in any one year. Members will draw numbers to determine length of term to be served. Subsequent members will each serve for three years.

ORGANIZATION

The County SARB shall annually elect one member as chairman of the committee who will have the responsibility for coordinating the services of the County School Attendance Review Board. The chairman shall have the authority to appoint committees or sub-committees for short durations of time to study special issues when the need arises.

The County SARB shall annually elect a vice-chairman who will be responsible for conducting the scheduled meetings in the absence of the chairman. The vice-chairman shall become chairman-elect at the next annual organizational meeting.

MEETINGS

Regular scheduled meetings will be held at the Yolo County Office of Education. Unless notified otherwise, all regular meetings will be scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m. The chairman is authorized to call special meetings when he determines it necessary to do so. In special circumstances, meetings at other than regular scheduled times, may be called to permit the committee to meet and discuss student attendance and behavior issues with parents. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the appointed members.

FUNCTION OF SARB

The primary function of the Yolo County SARB is to be of utmost service to school district personnel, parents and students in resolving habitual truancy, irregular attendance, insubordination, or disorderly conduct problems. In resolving these issues, the Yolo County SARB will avail itself to the full use of services offered by agencies whose purpose is to assist students possessing these problems. Only after an exhaustive effort by the Yolo County SARB, school district personnel, and cooperating local agencies has failed, will the Yolo County SARB direct the County Superintendent of Schools to request a petition in Juvenile Court. The Yolo County SARB is committed to, and will, request the petition to be filed when it has not been successful in resolving the issues stated in the district referrals.

SARB
Rules and Regulations

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The Yolo County School Attendance Review Board encourages school districts to refer students with attendance and truancy problems to the committee for further review and recommendation. When the referral is submitted, the Yolo County SARB assumes that all local efforts and resources available have been unsuccessful in resolving the problem.

The referral will contain information that will reveal agencies and services already used for assistance including, but not limited to, the following suggested sources:

a. School administrators
b. Teachers
c. School counselors
d. Parents
e. Department of Social Services
f. Mental Health Services
g. Delinquency Prevention Committee
h. Family Service Bureau
i. Family Minister
j. Family Physician
k. Law enforcement agencies
l. District SARBs

Additionally, the referral must contain a summary statement to indicate the student's academic record, behavior pattern, and attendance record. All referrals must be signed by the District Superintendent or his designated representative. All information contained in the referral and submitted to the Yolo County SARB will be maintained in such manner that will insure confidentiality.

In the event it becomes apparent to the committee that community resources have not been utilized at the local level the Yolo County SARB may return the referral with recommendations to the school district that additional resources be used in an attempt to resolve the issue at that level.

When a referral is made to the Yolo County SARB the chairman will notify the parent or guardian that a conference will be held to discuss the referral. The notification will be by registered mail and will include the following information:

a. The name and address of the County SARB to which the referral has been made.
b. The date, time, and place of the conference.
c. The reason for the referral.
d. The person making the referral will be in attendance to provide necessary information.
e. The parent or guardian has the right to a representative of their coice.
f. If the County SARB determines that available school and community services cannot resolve the problem or if the pupil fails to respond to the directions of the SARB, or to recommendations made for improvement, the SARB shall direct the Yolo County Superintendent of Schools to request a petition on behalf of the pupil in the

Juvenile Court of the county.

g. In the event that the parent or guardian of the student fails to respond to directions of the Yolo County SARB or to services offered on behalf of the minor, the Yolo County SARB shall direct that the student be referred to the Yolo County Probation Department or to the Yolo County Social Services Department under the Welfare and Institutions Code, and the Yolo County SARB may require the referring school district to file a complaint against the parent or guardian as provided in Education Code Section 48291 or 48454.

In determining the recommendation to be made regarding the referred student, the Yolo County SARB may consider transfer of the student to an opportunity class, continuation school, or enrollment in another school.

It shall be a policy of the Yolo County SARB to require a follow-up study to be made for each student recommended for placement in any of the schools in terms of compliance with the placement recommendations and requirements.

When placement recommendations and local assistance are not successful in resolving the attendance or behavior problem, the Yolo County SARB will direct the County Superintendent of Schools to request a petition in the Juvenile Court of Yolo County.

The Yolo County SARB will provide the County Superintendent of Schools, on an annual basis, the number and types of referrals made to the SARB and shall assist the superintendent in the preparation of his report to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction mandated by Education Code Section 48272.

GAC:aw

Revised 5/2/78
Revised 12/3/75
6/2/75

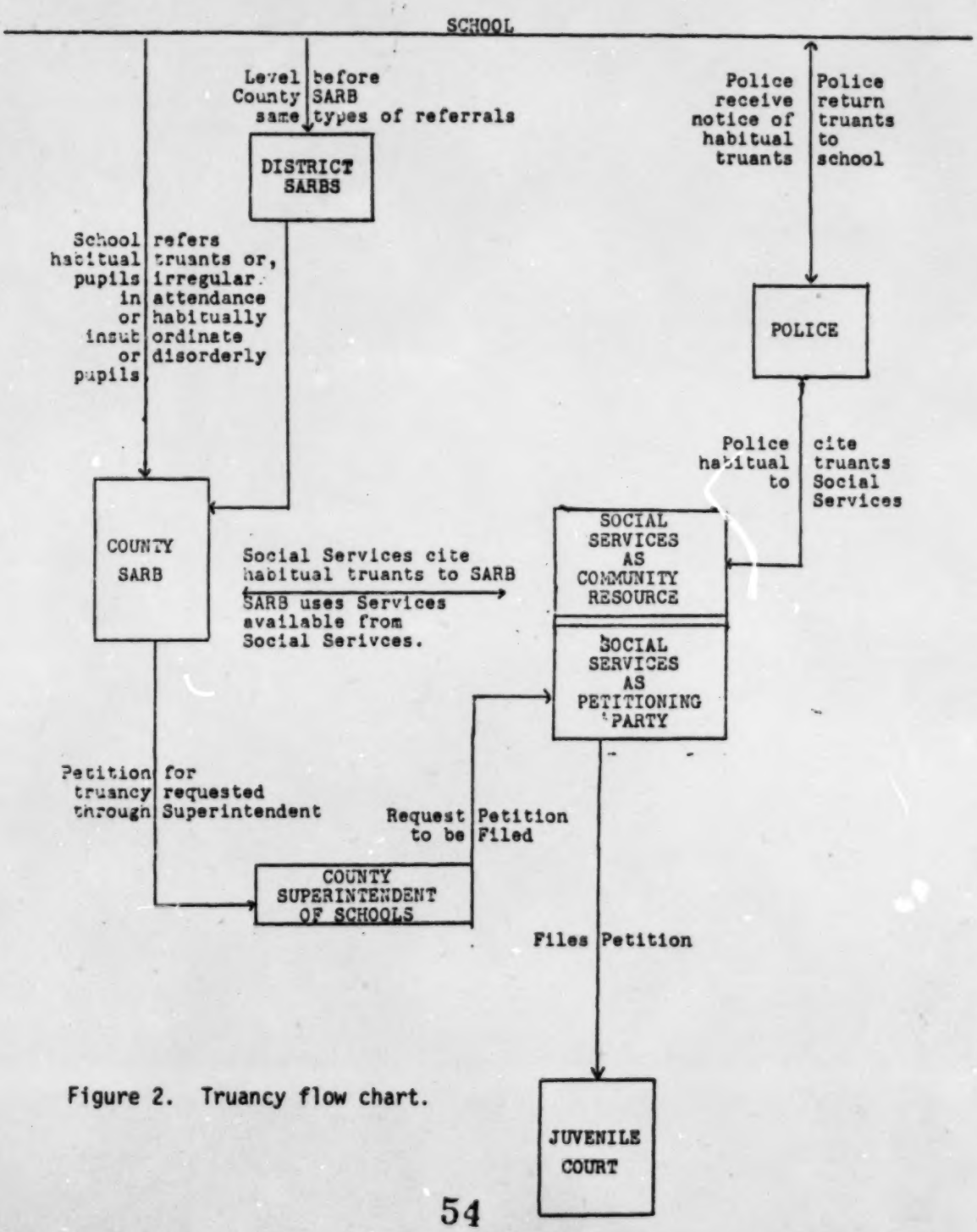
SCHOOL
Level before
County SARB
same types of referrals
DISTRICT SARBS
Police receive notice of habitual truants
Police return truants to school
School refers habitual truants or, pupils in irregular attendance or habitually insubordinate or disorderly pupils
POLICE
Police cite habitual truants to Social Services
COUNTY SARB
Social Services cite habitual truants to SARB
SARB uses Services available from Social Serivces.
SOCIAL SERVICES AS COMMUNITY RESOURCE
SOCIAL SERVICES AS PETITIONING PARTY
Petition for truancy requested through Superintendent
Request to be Petition Filed
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Files Petition
JUVENILE COURT

Figure 2. Truancy flow chart.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. District (circle one) Esparto Winters Woodland Davis Washington

2. What do you use as a working definition of truancy?

_____

_____

_____

3. What is your policy regarding school attendance? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Take attendance daily
- ☐ Take attendance each class period
- ☐ Follow-up with telephone call to parent on day of absence
- ☐ Follow-up with telephone call to parent if absent a second day
- ☐ Follow-up when no excuse received on child's return to school
- ☐ Follow-up with home visit after _____ days absence (please indicate number of days)
- ☐ Contact other agency (please specify) _____
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

_____

4. Do you or members of your staff ever pick up truant children and bring them to school?

- ☐ Yes, routinely
- ☐ Yes, but rarely
- ☐ No, but would like to

  Please explain why not _____
- ☐ No, do not feel it is an appropriate function of school personnel
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

_____

5. Have you instituted policies or procedures not covered above, for dealing with school attendance problems? (If it requires a lengthy answer, we will be pleased to discuss it with you either in person or by telephone.)

- ☐ YES, please describe _____

_____

_____

- ☐ YES, prefer to discuss it in person or by telephone (to preserve anonymity on this questionnaire, please phone the number listed at the end of the questionnaire).
- ☐ None in addition to those already indicated

6. Please estimate the number of children at your school who fall in the various categories listed below, for last year and this Fall. Do not count the same child in more than one category--pick the category that fits best.

	1979-80 Academic year		Fall 1980 Current year	
a. Parent-elicited truancy: parent keeps child at home for a variety of reasons - economic, psychological, etc.	boys	girls	boys	girls
b. Child-elicited truancy: parent attempts to get child to school; child takes off whenever possible.	boys	girls	boys	girls
c. Chronic nonattenders: child-elicited truancy but parent goes along with it, spurious and flimsy excuses provided.	boys	girls	boys	girls
d. Period cutters: student comes to school but skips some classes (please indicate if not applicable to your school).	boys	girls	boys	girls
e. One-time offenders: try it once or twice, when caught resume regular attendance.	boys	girls	boys	girls
f. Potential truants: students who need constant monitoring (but not yet in above categories)	boys	girls	boys	girls
g. Chronic tardiness: child-elicited	boys	girls	boys	girls
h. Chronic tardiness: parent-elicited	boys	girls	boys	girls
i. Other (please describe and give frequency _____ _____	boys	girls	boys	girls

7. What was the total enrollment at your school for the 1979-80 academic year?
   Boys _____ Girls _____ (if breakdown available)
   Total (if breakdown by sex not available) _____

8. Current enrollment?
   Boys _____ Girls _____
   Total (if breakdown by sex not available) _____

9. In what percentage of cases of truancy do you feel the following factors play a role?

	Few cases (0-20%)	Some cases (20-50%)	Many cases (50-80%)	Most cases (80-100%)	Don't know
a. Child's disinterest in subjects of study*	___	___	___	___	___
b. Difficulty of school work	___	___	___	___	___
c. Feelings of social inferiority, e.g., rejection by other students, has few or no friends	___	___	___	___	___
d. Feelings of difference from other students due to racial or ethnic factors	___	___	___	___	___
e. Truancy appears to be a spill-over effect from home problems	___	___	___	___	___
f. Identifies with truant and/or delinquent subculture	___	___	___	___	___
g. Problem between student and teacher	___	___	___	___	___
h. Parental devaluation of schooling	___	___	___	___	___
(remember, estimate the percentage of all truants who fit each description)					
i. Ineffective parent(s) unable to alter child's behavior	___	___	___	___	___
j. Socio-emotional exceptionality, e.g., hyperkinesis, schizophrenia, extreme withdrawal, etc.	___	___	___	___	___
k. Physical disability	___	___	___	___	___
l. Intellectual exceptionality, e.g., mental retardation, learning disability	___	___	___	___	___
m. Financial problems in family	___	___	___	___	___
n. Inadequate preparedness for schoolwork, e.g., language problems, should be in lower grade, etc.	___	___	___	___	___
o. Other (please describe)					
_____	___	___	___	___	___

* for example, if you feel nearly all truants are disinterested in subjects of study, check "most cases"

10. Are you familiar with the Independent Study Agreement?

☐ YES ☐ NO

11. Are the teachers at your school familiar with the Independent Study Agreement?

☐ Most (75-100%) ☐ Some (25-75%) ☐ Few (less than 25%)

12. Is the Independent Study Agreement used at your school?

☐ YES a. Please estimate number for 1979-80 academic year _____

b. Of these, how many involved children who had previously been attendance problems _____

☐ NO

13. Do you see a need for the adoption of a consistent policy for dealing with school attendance in the county?

☐ NO (check all that apply)

- ☐ a. Best to leave flexibility for individual school to develop its own policy.
- ☐ b. Already consistent as specified by law.
- ☐ c. Other (please specify)

_____

_____

☐ YES (check all that apply)

- ☐ a. Would make it easier to work with community agencies.
- ☐ b. Would provide broader support for action by any given school (within the general framework specified).
- ☐ c. Would require action from schools which have been too lax on attendance.
- ☐ d. Would require action from support agencies such as police, Social Services and Probation.
- ☐ e. Other (please specify)

_____

_____

14. What changes in the following might serve to improve school attendance levels?

	Need to increase	About right	Need to decrease	Probably irrelevant	Don't know
a. Attendance checks by teacher in classroom	___	___	___	___	___
b. Follow-up home visits	___	___	___	___	___
c. Variety in curriculum	___	___	___	___	___
d. Special classes or programs	___	___	___	___	___
e. Class size	___	___	___	___	___

(continued)

		Need to increase	About right	Need to decrease	Probably irrelevant	Don't know
f.	Counseling staff	___	___	___	___	___
g.	Education of teachers in dealing with problem children	___	___	___	___	___
h.	Restriction of students to campus during school hours	___	___	___	___	___
i.	Community pressure on children and parents	___	___	___	___	___
j.	Academic competition	___	___	___	___	___
k.	Supervision by paid school attendance officers	___	___	___	___	___
l.	Supervision by volunteers, e.g., parents or college students	___	___	___	___	___
m.	Strictness of administrators towards truants	___	___	___	___	___
n.	Other (please specify and rate)					
	_____	___	___	___	___	___
	_____	___	___	___	___	___

15. In order to get an idea of the use of various agencies, would you please estimate the number of children involved in contacts by your school with the agencies listed, since September 1979 (includes 1979-80 academic year plus the current semester).

_____ SARB (School Attendance Review Board)
_____ Police or sheriff
_____ Youth and Family Services, Dept. of Social Services
_____ Child Protective Services, Dept. of Social Services
_____ Probation Department
_____ Other (please specify) _____
_____ _____

16. To what degree have you found the following agencies effective in helping you deal with truants?

		Very effective	Effective	Ineffective	Very ineffective
a.	SARB	_____	_____	_____	_____
b.	Police or sheriff	_____	_____	_____	_____
c.	Social Services	_____	_____	_____	_____
d.	Probation	_____	_____	_____	_____
e.	Other (please specify)	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____				

17. Please indicate, by checking the appropriate boxes, the agencies you believe are responsible for the following actions (you may check more than one):

	local school personnel	district personnel	SARB	Police or Sheriff	Social Services	Probation Dept.
a. Monitoring school attendance on a daily basis.						
b. Questioning children off school grounds during school hours.						
c. Picking up children off school grounds and returning them to school.						
d. Making the initial contact with parents when absence occurs repeatedly.						
e. Making the follow-up contact with parents when absence occurs repeatedly.						
f. Responding to request for assistance from parent in enforcing child's school attendance.						
g. Investigating family factors contributing to absence from school.						
h. Dealing with home problems which may be affecting child's school attendance.						
i. Investigating factors outside the home, e.g., nearby house without adult supervision or other area where children may congregate during school hours.						
j. Initiating legal action in cases of truancy where no other illegal activities are involved.						
k. Monitoring school attendance of wards of the Court who are on probation.						
l. Investigating school factors which may be affecting child's school attendance.						
m. Dealing with in-school behavior problems which may be related to truancy, i.e., conflicts with other students or teachers.						
n. Other (please specify and rate)						
_____						
_____						
_____						

18. What changes, if any, do you see needed in the truancy policies of the various agencies. If their current policy is satisfactory, write OK in the appropriate box. If you feel an increase is needed, please indicate with a + (plus mark).

	local school personnel	district personnel	SARB	Police or Sheriff	Social Services	Probation Dept
a. Firm stand in enforcing school attendance.						
b. Consistency in policy, expecially in dealing with repeat offenders.						
c. Work with school personnel.						
d. Move more quickly on attendance matters.						
e. Take active role in dealing with underlying problems in child's home environment.						
f. Other (please specify and rate)						
(remember to use OK, +,or leave blank)						

19. Assuming that all reasonable measures have been attempted, how should the schools deal with chronic truants? (Please rate the desireability of the following):

	Very desireable	Desireable	Undesireable	Very undesireable
a. Continue to work on keeping them within the conventional school system.	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Develop special classes within the school.	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Use alternative institutions, e.g., continuation school, with continued attempts to enforce attendance.	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. After all reasonable efforts have been expended, drop the student from the roster.	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. Other (please describe and rate)				
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

20. Do you think a program aimed at community awareness of the problems of truancy and the importance of school attendance is likely to be beneficial?

☐ YES

- ☐ Would probably be worth the time, effort, and expense.
- ☐ Other reasons (please explain)

☐ MAYBE

- ☐ Not sure that the target population would be reached.
- ☐ Other reasons (please explain)

☐ NO

- ☐ Unlikely that the target population would be reached.
- ☐ Truancy is usually a symptom of other problems, and promoting attendance without dealing with the underlying difficulties is superficial and not likely to be effective.
- ☐ Other reasons (please explain)

21. Additional comments or suggestions:

Thank you very much for your assistance in providing this information.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Barbara Sommer, Ph.D.
Dept. of Psychology, UCD
752-1876 or 756-7553
or leave message at 752-1880

INTERVIEW WITH SOCIAL SERVICES AND PROBATION PERSONNEL

1. Their dealings with truants:
   a. General procedures.
      For first offense, repeated truancy, Court wards
   b. What do they see as major contributing factors to truancy?
      (try to get a ranking in order of frequency and importance)

2. Relations with <u>schools</u>:
   a. What dealings have they had regarding truants?
   b. How many calls, and from whom.
   c. Any regular communication? With whom? How often?
   d. Are there specific policies or guidelines known both the(social workers) (probation officers) and school personnel?
      What are these?
   e. How satisfactory is the present relationship?
   f. Suggestions for improvement (go for specifics)

3. Relations with <u>law enforcement</u> personnel
   a. What dealings have they had regarding truants?
   b. Any regular communication? With whom? How often?
   c. Are there specific policies or guidelines known both to (social workers) (probations officers) and police officers or sheriff deputies?
      What are these?
   d. How satisfactory is the present relationship?
   f. Suggestions for improvement (go for specifics)

4. Relations with the Department of <u>(Social Services) (Probation)</u>
   a. What dealings have they had regarding truants (with agency in question)?
   b. Any regular communication? With whom? How often?
   c. Are there specific polices or guidelines known to personnel in both agencies?
      What are these?
   d. How satisfactory is the present relationship?
   f. Suggestions for improvement (go for specifics)

5. Need for a uniform policy throughout the County? (advantages and disadvantages)

6. Usefulness of a program aimed at community awareness. Would they provide support?

7. Additional comments or suggestions.

INTERVIEW WITH SARB (School Attendance Review Board) MEMBERS

1. What are their policies and procedures regarding truants?

2. Number of referrals:
   1979-80 academic year

   currently

3. How effective has SARB been in improving school attendance?

4. Need for a uniform policy throughout the County? By district? Or better left to local schools? (advantages and disadvantages)

5. Usefulness of a program aimed at community awareness. Would they provide support?

6. Additional comments or suggestions.

INTERVIEW WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL (Youth Services Officers)

1. Their dealings with truants:
   a. How do the officers get involved with truancy, e.g., referrals, arrests, etc.
   b. Do patrol officers question children not in school during school hours?
   c. Do they pick them up? Under what circumstances?
   d. Procedures for dealing with children during school hours
      1) for first known offense
      2) for repeated truancy
      3) for wards of the Court
   e. What do they see as major contributing factors to truancy? (get ranking of frequency and importance)
2. Relations with schools:
   a. What dealings have they had regarding truants?
   b. How many calls, and from whom (go for specifics)
   c. Any regular communication? With whom? How often?
   d. Are there specific policies or guidelines known both to officers and school personnel?

      What are these?
   e. How satisfactory is the present relationship?
   f. Suggestions for improvement (go for specifics)

3. Relations with the Probation Dept:
   a. What dealings have they had regarding truants?
   b. How many cases during last academic year? current year ?
   c. Any regular communication? With whom?
   d. Are there specific policies or guidelines known both to officers and probation personnel? What are these?
   e. How satisfactory is the present relationship?
   f. Suggestions for improvement (go for specifics)

4. Relations with the Department of Social Services:

   (Ask questions as above)

   You may need to distinguish between Child Protective Service workers and social workers.

5. Need for a uniform policy throughout the County?

   (Advantages and disadvantages)

6. Usefulness of a program aimed at community awareness. Would they provide support?

7. Additional comments or suggestions.

INTERVIEW WITH DISTRICT PERSONNEL (Superintendent or Asst.)

1. Is there a district policy regarding school attendance?

   If so, what is it?

2. Have any special programs for reducing truancy been implemented?

   When?

   Outcomes?

3. Can we get statistical information regarding school absence -- breakdown by excused illness, other excused, unexcused or whatever system they use.

4. Total enrollment figures by school.

5. Problem of schools or individual teachers condoning absence on the part of troublesome children. Extent of problem, e.g., how many, how often.

6. What <u>institutional</u> changes might alleviate problem?

   e.g., curriculum change, special services, teacher training, etc.

7. Which agencies do they see as carrying the major responsibility for ensuring school attendance?

   District office
   local school
   parents
   law enforcement
   Probation
   Social Services

8. What, if any, support services needed from other agencies?
   e.g., police, Social Services, Probation, other.

9. What support has been received? (go for specific examples)

10. Need for change in policies of (specify each)

    police or sheriff
    Probation
    Social Services
    local schools
    district office

11. After all reasonable measures have been attempted, how should schools deal with chronic truants?

12. Need for consistent policy county-wide? Or better to leave to local school? Or at district level? (advantages and disadvantages)

13. Usefulness of program aimed at community awareness. Would they provide support for such a program?

14. Additional comments or suggestions.

RESOURCE LIST

1. "Delinquency Prevention: Theories and Strategies." June 1980. Prevention Information, California Youth Authority, Sacramento, CA Pearl S. West, Director

2. "Dropout Prevention" A special report by the National Advisory Council on Supplementary Centers and Services. April 1975. 425 13th St., N.W., Suite 529, Washington D.C., 20004

3. "Helping Overcome Learner Dropouts (HOLD)" A prescriptive secondary guidance program in dropout prevention, a Title IV-C program. Pajaro Valley Unified School District 340 Lincoln St., Watsonville, CA 95076

4. "Project New Start" An exemplary dropout recovery program available for adoption or adaptation under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title IV-C. 1980-81. Fullerton Union HIgh School District 120 W. Wilshire Ave., Fullerton, CA 92632

5. "Transcripts of Hearing on Character Education" The Senate Select Committee on Innovations in School Finance and Character Education. Sept. 1980. State Capitol, rm. 4203, Sacramento, CA. Contact Jon Peterson (916) 445-1476

6. "Attendance and Absenteeism in California Schools" Report P-832 from the Auditor General's Office to the California Legislature. Auditor General 925 L Street, Suite 750, Sacramento, CA 95814

7. "Operation Stay In School" A preventative program to help keep children of compulsory school age (16 to 18) in school. Sept. 1979 George K. Hansen, Chief; Fresno Police Dept., Fresno, CA also Fresno Unified School District, Tulare and M Streets, Fresno, CA 93721

8. Task Force on Truancy - Oakland Community Organization. (415) 261-8440

9. "SARB Newsletter" Los Angeles County SARB, 9300 E. IMperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242 (213) 922-6231

10. "Where Have All the Students Gone?" 1975. National PTA, 700 N. Rush St., Chicago, Ill. 60611

11. "Keeping Children in School: Problems and Solutions" American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Critical Issues Report, 1979. American Association of School Administrators, 1801 N. Moore St., Arlington, VA 22209

12. "Napa Valley Project - A behavior intervention approach." The program goals are to change student behaviors that interfere with academic and social success - Title IV-C. 2425 Jefferson St., Napa, CA 94558; Thomas A. Spencer, MSW coordinator, (707) 252-5352

RESOURCE LIST (cont.)

13. "Adlerian counseling concepts for encouraging parents and teachers (Accept)" Home and school working together improving adult/child relationships.
Elk Grove Unified School District
7037 Briggs Dr., Sacramento, CA 95828 (916) 383-1562

14. "Competency-based advisement" a Title IV-C program which provides each student an opportunity to pick a significant adult to assist with educational and social growth experience, 1979.
Irvine Unified School District
2941 Alton Ave., Irvine, CA 92714

15. Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools
John R. Burton - consultant
Los Angeles County Education Center
9300 E. Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242

16. San Mateo Educational Resources Center (SMERC) Reports available on microfiche.
San Mateo County Office of Education
333 Main St., Redwood City, CA 94063

17. Northern California Center for Educational Improvement
5A County Center Drive, Oroville, CA 95965
Jerry Balasek, Director (916) 534-4267/534-4208

Note: Those materials that we had are deposited with the secretary of SARB in the County Office of Education.

from the Daily Democrat, March 2, 1981, page 8

The importance of being honest

"Show your children you trust them—and they can trust you," said Marilyn Roland, an educational psychologist to a group of 22 persons at a West Davis Intermediate School Parent-Teacher Association meeting Thursday night.

Mrs. Roland hosted a workshop aimed at the increasing independence and peer pressures being experienced by the pre-adolescent and how parents can cope with their everchanging moods.

She said, "establishing an honest relationship with them is top priority. Share experiences with them so they will share experiences with you.

"When sharing experiences with them, be honest with your responses. Share negative responses with them as well as the positive ones. They will know your responses are honest and will be more likely to confide in you again."

She emphasized that it is also very important not to make irrational promises that cannot be kept. The child must be able to rely on the ability of the parent to follow through with their promises.

Showing interest in the child's feelings is also very important. "Kids send out pretty clear signals," said Mrs. Roland. "When they become irritable— that may be the best time to approach them and ask them what the problem seems to be."

She said most children find it hard to answer questions that are put to them point blank. When asked "What's wrong?" the universal answer is "Nothing," from the child.

That is why it is important for the child to feel a climate of honesty with the parent. He needs to know that the parent really cares about the feelings being experienced and wants to help.

"Let the child know that it is all right to have these feelings. It frees him to relate to you. If you just ask him point blank, he may feel he is being challenged," said Mrs. Roland.

She said telling him that you have noticed that he looks sad or angry may free him to talk to you. He will not feel that challenge.

Children often feel the need for privacy and independence and therefore "turn off" when approached by their parents or other adults.

However, they will almost always open up to their peers. They are dependent on their peers and are seeking a unanimous validation of themselves. Their perception of their social situation is: They (peers) dress and talk like me— so I must be OK.

According to Mrs. Roland, "Differences are threatening to their OK-ness and they want to define themselves as OK people."

Mrs. Roland said it is normal for children to want to spend all of their time with their peers until they are old enough to realize their own identity, but it should not interfere with the household routine.

One way of getting the child to take more responsibility with household chores is to include them in the decisions that affect them and try to involve them in what has to be done.

Decision-making is a big part of everyone's life and children should learn this art early in life. "Allow them to make decisions and take on responsibility according to their ability. See how they handle it and then dole out more responsibility accordingly," said Mrs. Roland.

"Set limits and see if they can handle and accept them. When they make a good decision or take a stand, let them know you are proud and appreciate their decision.

"Later in life these acceptances of their decisions will help them to be able to make good adult decisions.' Make sure they know that when they make a mistake it is all right.

"Re-evaluate the situation and let them try again—still trust them. You know they didn't do it on purpose. Make sure they know it."

She said it is important to convey your satisfaction with them and the things they do. Acknowledge the things they do well and mention what you really like about them.

She explained that children in this age group tend to grow away and then fall back a little and repeat the process several times. Hopefully, they will gain a little ground each time.

Mrs. Roland said the parents and the children experience a constant imbalance. The parent says go—be independent; no—come back.

The child similarly says: I want to leave— no, take me back.

They want to be independent, but they are still seeking parent approval and involvement. "If you want your child to achieve the independence they seek, start very early to show them you trust them and they will usually live up to your expectations" Said Mrs. Roland.

Mrs. Roland reminded the group, "The successful parent works himself out of a job, but not out of a relationship."